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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 SARAJEVO 000883

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: SUBJECT: BOSNIA - CODEL CARNAHAN HELPS MARK  
SREBRENICA ANNIVERSARY AND REINFORCES SUPPORT FOR REFORMS

REF: SARAJEVO 865

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Classified By: Ambassador Charles English. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) Summary: From July 11-13 the Congressional delegation (CODEL) led by Representative Russ Carnahan (D-MO) and including Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) and Representative Mike Turner (R-OH) visited Bosnia-Herzegovina, underscoring the strength of the U.S. commitment to help Bosnia join Euro-Atlantic structures. The CODEL traveled to Srebrenica for the 14th Commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide and laid a memorial wreath to honor the victims. Following the Srebrenica commemoration, the CODEL met with representatives of all of Bosnia's major political parties, as well as its Tri-Presidency. The three Presidency members -- Bosniak member and Party for BiH (SBiH) leader Haris Silajdzic, Croat member and Social Democratic Party (SDP) official Zeljko Komsic, and Serb member and Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) official Nebojsa Radmanovic -- met with the delegation together. The CODEL also had dinner with Party of Democratic Action (SDA) deputy chairman Asim Sarajljic (in chairman Sulejman Tihic's absence), Party of Democratic Progress (PDP) chairman Mladen Ivanic, Democratic Party (DS) chairman Dragan Cavic, SDP chairman Zlatko Lagumdzija, Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ)-BiH deputy chairman Niko Lozancic, and HDZ-1990 chairman Bozo Ljubic. SBiH Chairman Haris Silajdzic and SNSD Chairman Milorad Dodik accepted but did not show up for the dinner. The CODEL also met with American University students, civil society leaders, the International Committee on Missing Persons (ICMP), and HighRep Valentin Inzko. The CODEL's visit which followed CODEL Cardin's visit two weeks earlier and Vice President Biden's May policy speech in the BiH Parliament building, received wide favorable press coverage as a further signal that the U.S. will stay the course in Bosnia. End Summary

Commemoration of Genocide

12. (SBU) Immediately following their July 11 arrival in Sarajevo, CODEL Carnahan traveled to Srebrenica to attend the 14th Commemoration of the genocide in Srebrenica. After laying a wreath on the memorial stone, delegation members stood along side Bosniak political leaders during the ceremony which included a speech by the Ambassador and a Muslim funeral service. CODEL members toured the Potocari Battery Factory, met with Mothers of Srebrenica as well as a delegation of Bosniak-Americans from Representative Carnahan's home district in St. Louis. As reported reftel,

the CODEL press statements highlighted US, EU and NATO commitment to keep peace in the region and ensure the tragedy is never repeated along with calls for the arrest of war criminal Ratko Mladic received wide and favorable coverage on electronic and print media.

#### The Presidency on Bosnian Politics, the IC

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¶3. (C) In a July 12 meeting with the CODEL, the three members of the Presidency discussed Bosnia's greatest successes and challenges. Haris Silajdzic, the Bosniak member of the Presidency, stressed that it was of the utmost importance for Bosnia to become a member of the EU and NATO, noting that Bosnia would like a Membership Action Plan (MAP). Silajdzic said that though the Dayton Peace Accords was a good agreement, it had been difficult for Bosnia to maintain the accords' standards and to permit "minimum integration" (i.e. refugees returns), especially as violations of the accords had been allowed to occur. Nejbosa Radmanovic, the Serb member of the Presidency, focused on the role of the International Community (IC) in Bosnia. He said that although Vice President Biden's May visit had brought a new hope with regard to Bosnia's EU and NATO's aspirations, Bosnia has not always felt it had the support of the IC with regard to NATO membership. Similarly, Radmanovic said that the EU had rejected Bosnia's bid to join the EU's visa liberalization regime, and by doing so, was sending the message -- "You are not welcome." Zejlko Komsic, the Croat Member and current chair of the Presidency, cited defense reform as one of Bosnia's greatest successes. He attributed Bosnia's success with defense reform in part to U.S. efforts, which he said were also largely responsible for adoption of the constitutional amendment on Brcko. With regard to

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challenges, Komsic admitted that relations between the ethnic groups are much better than politicians portray with their words and actions, and that politicians had let the public down.

#### The CODEL Offers Friendly Advice

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¶4. (SBU) Representative Carnahan thanked Bosnia for contributing know-how on demining in Iraq, and said that more work needed to be done on education, especially since subject matters were being treated differently in schools across the country. Representative Woolsey asked why the EU should let Bosnia in if Bosnia has not done the work required of it by the EU. She also said that during their visit to Srebrenica over the weekend, the Mothers of Srebrenica had expressed anger towards the CODEL for not doing more to bring alleged war criminals to justice. Stressing that she was speaking as a friend of Bosnia, Woolsey said that in order to begin the healing and to build trust, the government needs to take specific steps. These include passing a resolution decaring that genocide had in fact occurred in Bosna, apologizing for the atrocities that had been ommitted, doing all it can to assist in identifying victims of the genocide and arresting and prosecuting those responsible for it.

#### OHR: IC Will Need to Remain Engaged in Bosnia

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¶5. (SBU) HighRep Valentin Inzko told the CODEL that the international community needs to stay engaged in Bosnia for some time and that the CODEL's presence in Srebrenica had sent a strong signal of a renewed US interest in Bosnia. The HighRep then listed some of the challenges the country faces, such as political obstacles impeding investment in the energy sector (i.e. hydropower), and infrastructure (construction of part of the "Corridor 5C" highway through Bosnia). He also spoke of other problems facing the country including: attempts by the entities to seize state-level competencies; the absence of a Supreme Court; the lack of investment in

Srebrenica by Sarajevo; segregation of schools in parts of the country; the Croats' insecurity; and the inability of those classified as "Others" to become President or serve in the BiH House of Peoples.

16. (C) Representative Turner expressed disappointment with the Office of the High Representative (OHR), stating that he expected OHR to be more than a "traffic cop" and to push for a "Dayton II" to reform the country's political structure. He asserted that if OHR could not fulfill this function, the US would have to step in for OHR. Inzko responded by saying that he has been willing to use his Bonn Powers and had done so in the case of the Republika Srpska National Assembly Conclusions. However, he confided that he had faced stiff resistance on the part of some European countries who oppose the use of the Bonn Powers due to their concern that the international community was perpetuating a concept that belonged to the past as well as Bosnia's dependency. The Ambassador pointed out that the key issue at play is how to revive the international presence and whether the international community can leverage Bosnia's desire to enter the EU and NATO to persuade Bosnian politicians to undertake needed reforms and to move away from the themes of separatism (advocated by Bosnian Serbs) and dominance (advocated by Bosniaks).

#### CODEL Cites Evidence of Progress

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17. (SBU) In a July 12 dinner with political party leaders at the Ambassador's residence, Representative Carnahan delivered a positive message to party leaders about the healing process he witnessed at Srebrenica and the sentiments the youth he had met conveyed to him about their desire for a multiethnic Bosnia. He stressed that this US administration wants to be heavily engaged in Bosnia and that it wants to work with the Bosnians to build on the progress made so far. Representative Mike Turner (R-OH) remarked that he always sees progress when he visits Bosnia and that the USG wants to partner with Bosnia in its further efforts.

#### Party Leaders Present Views on Constitutional Reform

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18. (C) The political leaders delivered divergent messages on the form constitutional reform should take, but all agreed on the need for it. Zlatko Lagumdžija (SDP) lauded the Dayton Accords for "stopping the war effectively without military force," but he added that the same Accords could now jeopardize Bosnia's future and that Bosnia needs to move past them. He expressed optimism that Bosnian leaders could take small steps on constitutional reform by the end of the year but was not sanguine about the prospect of major changes. He stressed that Bosnia will need constitutional reform for eventual NATO membership but that these reforms would not be possible without a clear US-European partnership. Asim Sarajlić (SDA) noted that SDA has always led dialogue on key issues, and he blamed Silajdzic for bringing down the 2006 "April Package" of constitutional reforms and then not proposing any viable alternatives. He encouraged the USG to help improve the political climate before launching reform talks. Niko Lozancic (HDZ-BiH) echoed Sarajlić's concerns about the political climate, adding that the April Package fell in part because the USG was alone in its endorsement of it. Mladen Ivanic (PDP) said that constitutional reform would be possible but not through a "big bang" approach. When the Ambassador asked whether he would be willing to modify entity voting in order to bring Bosnia into NATO, he replied that he does not support changes to entity voting and that most of the abuses of entity voting have come from SNSD. Bozo Ljubic (HDZ-1990) opined that Bosnia will continue as a dysfunctional state incapable of meeting its NATO and EU requirements until it undergoes constitutional reform, and that the USG will be essential to the reform process. He

complained that one-third of pre-war Bosnian Croats are now refugees who see no benefit to returning to Bosnia, as they would comprise a minority in either entity. Dragan Cavic (DS) opined that constitutional reform probably would not be possible because all sides are too frustrated, to seek appropriate compromises.

#### Party Leaders Expound on Government Woes

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¶9. (C) Party leaders also discussed other political stalemates with the CODEL. Lagumdzija reiterated his long-standing point that the ruling coalition must work out a deal on its own, adding that the USG should either pressure the government -- "without doing their job for them" -- or let it fall in the elections. Sarajljic chided Dodik for agreeing to elements of the Prud Agreement then blocking them in Parliament, and he stressed that he supports Tihic's decision to back away from Prud until other parties decide to join the discussion. Lozancic noted that there is a big difference between what political leaders favor and what they say they favor, which fuels mistrust. He noted that those parties that supported the April Package fell in the following elections, which shows that willingness to compromise is seen as a sign of weakness. He quipped that the government has so much internal dissent that opposition is not necessary. Striking a more positive note, Ivanic and Lagumdzija lauded Cavic for publicly acknowledging the Srebrenica genocide despite the heat he took from the RS public. Lagumdzija stressed that Cavic was punished by his party and the Serb populace and left out to dry by the international community. Senator Carnahan praised Cavic and said that if other Bosnian politicians could show similar courage, Bosnia could make progress.

#### Representative Turner Reconnects with "Sister City"

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¶10. (SBU) Representative Turner -- who served as mayor of Dayton, Ohio when the Dayton Accords were signed -- met with current Deputy Mayor of Sarajevo Nenad Markovic, advisor to the Mayor Emir Suljagic, and Cantonal PM Besim Mehmedic to convey support for Sarajevo as Dayton's "sister city." Mehmedic told Rep. Turner that Sarajevo could greatly benefit from Dayton's expertise -- and USG financial support -- in building a city infrastructure. Rep. Turner replied that USAID offers funding opportunities for local government capacity building and that he would inform Dayton of Sarajevo's interest in its expertise. The group then discussed Srebrenica, and Rep. Turner stressed that he witnessed hope, not hate, at the commemoration and that although it is understandable for Bosnian leaders to be frustrated by Bosnia's lack of progress, Bosnians should be proud of how far they have come since the war. Rep. Turner

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added that this administration will be more engaged in Bosnia, particularly given Secretary Clinton's family's legacy.

Comment  
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¶11. (SBU) CODEL Carnahan's recent visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina firmly underscored the message that the US cares deeply for BiH and for what its people have been through including the Srebrenica genocide. The CODEL's message was well delivered to all political interlocutors and was widely echoed in the print and electronic media in both entities. The visit of Representatives Carnahan, Turner and Woolsey, following closely the visit of CODEL Cardin, and Vice President's Biden speech effectively reinforced the message that the USG is back and firmly engaged in helping BiH become a normal and functional state moving ahead on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration. End Comment  
ENGLISH